

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05

H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 MC-02 ACDA-07 OMB-01 AID-05

IGA-02 /096 W

-----001057 291148Z /43

P R 290951Z JUL 77

FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 097

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY SANA

S E C R E T NAIROBI 9613

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, US, SO, KE

SUBJ: KENYA DEFENSE OFFICIALS REACTION TO SOMALIA ARMS
DECISION

1. SUMMARY: SENIOR KENYAN DEFENSE OFFICIALS HAVE REACTED TO NEWS OF U.S. DECISION ON ARMS FOR SOMALIA WITH LESS EQUANIMITY THAN THEIR FOREIGN MINISTRY COUNTERPARTS. THEY BELIEVE THE CRITICAL QUESTION FOR KENYA IS HOW THE DECISION IS IMPLEMENTED, ESPECIALLY WHAT TYPES OF EQUIPMENT ARE PROVIDED. END SUMMARY.

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2. WIRE SERVICE REPORTS OF U.S. AND BRITISH DECISIONS TO SUPPLY ARMS TO SOMALIA APPEARED IN KENYA PRESS MORNING OF JULY 28. EMBOFF DISCUSSED U.S. DECISION LATER THAT DAY WITH PHILIP GITONGA, DEPUTY SECRETARY OF MOD (CURRENTLY THE SENIOR MOD CIVIL SERVANT PRESENT IN THE COUNTRY) AND BRIGADIER PETER KAKENYI, CHIEF OF STAFF OF MOD. WHILE DISCUSSION WAS AMICABLE AND FREE FROM ANY SENSE OF RECRIM-

INATION, IT WAS CLEAR THAT KENYAN DEFENSE ESTABLISHMENT HAS STRONG MISGIVINGS ABOUT U.S. DECISION TO SUPPLY ARMS TO SOMALIA.

3. EMBOFF EMPHASIZED THAT DECISION TO PROVIDE ARMS IN PRINCIPLE HAD NOT YET PROGRESSED TO IDENTIFICATION OF SPECIFIC EQUIPMENT, AND THAT U.S. WOULD INSIST THAT ANY ITEMS SUPPLIED MUST BE FOR SOMALIA'S DEFENSIVE USE. HE INDICATED THAT WE HOPED BY PROVIDING SOMALIA WITH WESTERN ALTERNATIVE TO SOVIET SOURCE OF ARMS, SOMALIA COULD BE INDUCED TO ASSUME MORE RESPONSIBLE ROLE IN HORN OF AFRICA SECURITY EQUATION. HE INDICATED THAT U.S. WAS ACUTELY AWARE OF SOMALIA'S CLAIMS ON KENYAN TERRITORY, AND WOULD NOT LOOK WITH FAVOR ON SOMALI EFFORTS TO PRESS THESE CLAIMS.

4. ALTHOUGH SOMEWHAT REASSURED BY FOREGOING ASPECTS OF U.S. DECISION, GITONGA SAID FRANKLY HIS FIRST REACTION HAD BEEN THAT U.S. AND BRITAIN WERE SHOWING THEMSELVES TO BE NO DIFFERENT FROM THE RUSSIANS. HE ACKNOWLEDGED VALIDITY OF OUR VIEW THAT A SOMALIA SUPPLIED BY WEST MIGHT BEHAVE MORE MODERATELY (A POINT BROUGHT OUT WELL IN JULY 28 NAIROBI DAILY NATION EDITORIAL, REPORTED SEPARATELY BY USINFO). HE CONCEDED THAT MASSIVE FLOW OF SOVIET ARMS TO ETHIOPIA WAS OF CONCERN TO KENYA. BUT HE WAS PESSIMISTIC ABOUT SOMALIA'S LONG-TERM AIMS. DJIBOUTI HAD ALREADY DROPPED INTO SOMALIA'S LAP DE FACTO, IF NOT DE JURE, AND THE

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SOMALIS WERE PRESSING THE ETHIOPIANS HARD IN THE OGADEN. NO KENYAN COULD REALLY BELIEVE THAT SOMALIA WOULD FOREGO EFFORT ULTIMATELY TO SEIZE NORTHEAST KENYA. THE RECENT VISIT OF SOMALI VICE-PRESIDENT KULMIE HAD SIMPLY CONFIRMED THAT SOMALI PROFESSIONS OF FRIENDSHIP DID NOT INCLUDE ANY SOFTENING OF IRREDENTISM REGARDING KENYAN TERRITORY.

5. BRIGADIER KAKENYI PUT HIS VIEWS EVEN MORE FORCEFULLY. HE SAID "YOU CAN'T PUT US IN THE SAME ROOM WITH THE SOMALIS." AT ANOTHER POINT HE REFERRED TO THE U.S. AND BRITISH DECISION AS "TERRIBLE." HE SAID SOME OF HIS MEN WERE WONDERING IF THE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PERSONNEL INVOLVED IN THE SALE OF U.S. AIRCRAFT TO KENYA WOULD NEXT FIND THEMSELVES DOWN THE ROAD A FEW MILES DOING THE SAME THING FOR SOMALIA.

6. GITONGA CONCLUDED THE CONVERSATION BY STATING THAT THE CRITICAL QUESTION FOR KENYA WOULD BE WHAT KIND OF WEAPONS ARE SUPPLIED TO SOMALIA. HE ACCEPTED U.S. ASSURANCES THAT ARMS WOULD BE LIMITED TO THOSE REQUIRED FOR DEFENSIVE PURPOSES, BUT HE QUESTIONED WHETHER U.S. COULD CONTROL THE USE OF WEAPONS ONCE IN THE HANDS OF THE SOMALIS. HE HOPED

U.S. WOULD KEEP KENYA INFORMED ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
ARMS DECISION.

7. FINALLY, ONE PROBABLE EFFECT OF ARMS SUPPLY DECISION
TO SOMALIA, WHICH I DID NOT UNDERSCORE IN NAIROBI 8767 WILL
BE EVENTUAL INCREASED PRESSURE FROM KENYANS FOR EXPANDED
ARMS PURCHASES FROM USG FOR ITS OWN DEFENSE AGAINST SOMALIA -
WHICH WILL ALSO FIND US IN TRAGICALLY IRONIC POSITION.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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Channel Indicators: n/a
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Disposition Approved on Date:
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Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
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Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
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Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
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Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1837586
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: KENYA DEFENSE OFFICIALS REACTION TO SOMALIA ARMS DECISION
TAGS: MASS, US, SO, KE
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/3ff8356a-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009